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THE HOME OF MAY ROBSON.

BY MRS. OLIVER BELL BUNCE.

HE actress of long ago either lived in great splendor or in a way not to challenge admiration. For the poorer ones, the home was not much to boast of—the chairs were generally out at the elbows, the curtains bedraggled (if they possessed them at all), and a general decay was visible in their surroundings, wherein they spent most of their lives when not playing.

Nowadays, these ladies of the drama are wonderfully alive to all decorative movements. In fact, they are thoroughly artistic, and have homes that are a delight to go into—places where, after the glitter of the footlights is over, they enjoy and are proud of.

Such a home has May Robson, that charming little body who fills such wonderful character parts at the Empire Theatre, where she has played now for some years.

In private life she is known as Mrs. Augustus Brown, the wife of an able physician, whose good deeds in charity and kindness to children have made him a power.

The home of this amiable couple is in a pretty neighborhood in one of the up-town streets. It is, after all, only a neat, modest, unpretentious dwelling, one of a row of brown stone, and situated half way in the block.

In the early spring, on the railing of the porch, a pot of flowers or basket of ferns is sure to find its way on the stone porch, Miss Robson declaring it is her greeting to those who enter within.

The drawing-room is a long and narrow one, with but few possibilities; but she has furnished it in excellent taste. It is not extravagantly equipped, but fitted with all the requirements of a well-furnished home.

On the walls are some good pictures in oil, strong water colors and rare prints.

These have been given mostly to Miss Robson by professional friends.

On the floor is an olive carpet in small design, which covers entirely the boards beneath, while over this is a sumptuous rug made of the skin, with heads and tails, of four small foxes, whose gray-shaded fur stands out as a decorative bit with those of Persian make, which are scattered here and there.

The window—a broad one which looks out on the street—is of itself an admirable scheme. It is heavily

draped and poled, with curtains of Oriental beauty, in which thinner ones of filmy lace act as a finishing touch.

As a centrepiece for this place there is a jardinière, rich in tones and tints, of some rare pottery, in which is planted a delicate fern, while above the pole, in fan shape, is a conventional device of ornamentation in leaves, flowers, and the like that make it quite above the ordinary treatment of window designs. The furniture is good in effect, each chair, rather, as a rule, in itself.

Some years ago Mrs. Brown went abroad, and in her wanderings in England picked up a brass jug which was formerly a milk pail. It was an old-fashioned affair with a handle, wide mouth, and robust in size. This she procured at a small price and on her return converted it into a lamp, which, when given the fashionable shade in tones of delicate pink, made it quite a picturesque object for a corner of this room.

Another time this little lady was presented with a handkerchief of great value in rare lace. She immediately transported it to her drawing-room, and made it a cover for a satin cushion in mauve. Its history was a strange one, and to preserve it this method was used, and proved a success.

Of course, in this room there are stands for bric-à-brac, small tea tables, and pretty shelves which do duty in china and aid the friendly call.

On these are small cups with saucers, a quaint jug or two, or a teapot in bright tones. But, for true personal comfort, at one end near the window is a roomy lounge, and on it is the never-failing silken cushion. There are cushions in rich colors, cushions in antique embroidery, cushions piled high in silver markings and gold threads, cushions everywhere—and not far beyond is a pier glass whose stand holds the photographs of great places and great people—artist friends, as they really are in every-day costume.

The piano at one end fills up a space near the folding-door. On it is a laurel wreath presented by the "Twelfth Night" in honor of some occasion, a guitar, the new books of the day, and a genuine work-basket with good pieces of linen to be embroidered at no distant time.

Beyond is the library, with its wealth of bookcases, and between the windows are stationed an old English chest, rich in carving, which was used as a receptacle for linen, and secured by Miss Robson after much persuasion.

This is the sanctum of Dr. Brown, where he studies when at home, and where the family rest in the early evening.



MISS MAY ROBSON.

As we ascend the stairs a panel of unusual decoration meets our eye.

The subject is a Japanese woman, gorgeously attired in a Kimono, elaborately finished in silver and gold. This was sent by a friend who playfully declared that the actress looked like this in a certain character part which she took at that time. Further on we pass into Miss Robson's boudoir, a large, airy room, in which there are three broad windows which let in the sunlight and air.

Under these sills is a capacious window seat which runs the whole length of the room, a regular cosy corner with its thick tufted cushion of sage-green corduroy, and added to this are pillows of every kind, in all sizes, in complementary tones of denim, cretonne and pailsilks.

Nearby is a dressing-glass of mahogany, on which every toilet accessory is found, all in silver, and every beauty appliance so well known to the laws of hygiene.

On the bed is a silk spread in which four squares of white silk form an inviting design, joined together by an insertion of dainty lace, with shams to match. This affair is lined with that peculiar tone known as dark Venetian red, an effect most striking.

The writing-desk, with the mantel shelf, makes for this room an excellent combination. On the desk are letters piled up, a pretty time-piece, some accessories in leather; in the centre is the picture of the good doctor.

Now, some people, when taking the actress from the footlights consider her a creation unfit for domestic duties and domestic life. In many cases this is lamentably true, but sometimes this is a mistake, for there are those who when not on duty are the most careful of home takers.

And it is really, after all, in the dining of this clever woman that her special handiwork stands out, her love of home, her domestic triumph. She rejoices in the making of preserves and pickles. Her closets teem with jellies, canned fruits, branded delicacies, and good old-fashioned ways of "putting up" peaches and pears, so that an adept in the business would acknowledge that this art had been studied to perfection. The buffet is decorated with china of her own designing, glass of her own selection, and in the drawer beneath there is a box devoted to embroideries, which are begun and completed generally during the evening performance when waiting for her cue.

When playing "Sowing the Wind" she worked faithfully on a linen tray-cloth of French design in pale

pinks and bow knots. At another time she finished in rich yellow tints an ample table-cover, and later on a set of doilies in violets, the tone of color of which she is so fond.

Without doubt Miss Robson is an all-around woman—she is never still, never idle. Certain days in the week she is a teacher of elocution, and often coaches amateurs for trial performances. It was Miss Robson who designed the silver spoon as a souvenir for the Actors' Fund. She paints, she sketches, she embroiders at all times. When a costume is to be procured for a certain part, she is obliged sometimes to hunt up a gown, which, when bought, she bakes in the oven for fear of unpleasant contagion.

When a character is once concerned Miss Robson studies the points that would amuse her audience. She is sure to make a hit by some novel and eccentric experiment. She adorns the part, gives coloring to the lines, and throws around it a peculiar pathos with

genuine good humor.

To her it is a picture of real life, for she is an artist portraying almost a realistic effect, and yet carrying with it a genius that beyond question is a power.

Mrs. Augustus Brown is a dainty lady of good dressing and charming manners, but May Robson is a cheer for the people, a cure for the blues, and to see her play is to believe again that life, with all its sorrows, has a merry side after all.



MISS ROBSON'S PARLOR.

ROYAL DRESDEN.

THE Royal Dresden, which is in itself a rich and beautiful ware, has always been noted for chandeliers and candelabrum, which have changed very little in style in a hundred years.

The present Empress of Germany has fitted up her boudoir with beautiful decorated panels in this ware, and, quoting an article on the subject from a foreign exchange, the description closes with this remark: "When every article of furniture contained in the apartments of the Empress has fallen to decay, the exquisite colorings of the panels will light up the walls as brilliantly as it does at the present day." It is impossible for an amateur to procure the Royal ware undecorated, although it can be ordered gilded in the simplest possible manner—a tiny single line of gold constituting the decoration—and the buyer can decorate and regild at discretion. Bear in mind, if you are offered a piece of white ware as Royal Dresden, that this is an impossibility, whether it is made in Meissen or not.